

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 15, 2009

The Honorable Timothy Geithner
Secretary of the Treasury
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Geithner:

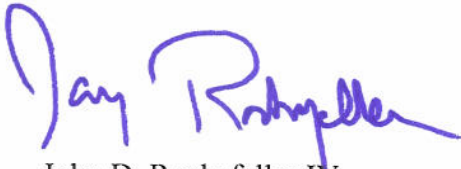
We are writing to express our deep concern about the news reports that Chrysler and General Motors (GM) plan to close hundreds of automobile dealerships nationwide. We must work to keep as many of these dealerships open as possible, and at the very least assist these businesses, their employees, the local communities, and their consumers during these challenging economic times.

We have learned that Chrysler intends to close 17 of its 24 franchises in West Virginia, putting an estimated 250 employees at risk. This figure will surely rise after GM announces the number of dealerships it will close. As you well understand, these substantial job losses will have a devastating economic impact on local communities, particularly in rural areas like West Virginia. In addition to the hardships that will face these small business owners, employees, and their families, the closings will result in less revenue for local governments, which translates into cuts in important government services. At a time when Americans are looking to their elected officials and government leaders to help them weather this economic crisis, the local impact of closing such a large number of dealerships is deeply troubling to us. As you work with Chrysler and GM to make them competitive, we urge you to give greater consideration to the negative impact on communities and work to preserve jobs.

Additionally, while we understand that as part of GM and Chrysler's restructuring they may need to examine their dealership contracts, we ask you to work with Congress to develop a comprehensive plan to help local communities, dealerships, and employees affected by any such closings. We need a strategy to assist these dealerships to stay in business despite losing their GM and Chrysler franchises. For example, these dealerships will need assistance selling their current inventory of vehicles as well as maintaining their used vehicle businesses and service and repair centers. For Chrysler and GM to eliminate these franchises and accompanying jobs without offering any support or alternatives is not acceptable during this economic downturn. We are also concerned about the impact of these closings on consumers. Any plan by the Administration and Congress must take into account consumer needs, such as access to quality service and honoring of warranties and service contracts.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this important matter. We stand ready to work with you and the Administration.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV



Robert C. Byrd

cc: Lawrence Summers, Director of the National Economic Council
Steven Rattner, Presidential Task Force on the Auto Industry
Ronald Bloom, Presidential Task Force on the Auto Industry
Edward Montgomery, Director of Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers